



Trail Repair & Trail Bridge Reconstruction

– Recovery Act Projects –

Archuleta, Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata Counties

The San Juan National Forest averages 1.7 million visitor days annually, contributing significantly to the tourism industry of the Four Corners. Its 1,800-mile trail system includes major segments of the Continental Divide and Colorado trails. Recovery Act funding has made possible the repair of 169 miles of backcountry trails and reconstruction of 17 trail bridges to

ensure resource protection and visitor safety.



TRAILS

Recovery Act funding was used to accomplish improvements to tread and drainage, stabilization, cribbing, clearing, brushing, and new signage on 169 miles of San Juan trails.

One of the most difficult projects was the reconstruction of a section of the remote Rincon La Osa Trail in the heart of the Weminuche Wilderness, Colorado's largest Congressionally designated Wilderness area.

Horseback riders and pack strings had had to use an old corduroy trail and bridge-type structure to cross a steep granite side slope seeking access to the upper Pine River drainage and Continental Divide. The Recovery Act funded the reconstruction of this degraded structure, which was dangerous to stock travel.

Because Rincon La Osa is within Wilderness, all aspects of the project had to be accomplished by primitive means. After the old structure was removed, trees were felled and stripped by hand. Large rocks were moved by hand, and yards of soil were carried to the site by crews and stock animals. The structure was contoured to reduce the grade and enlarge the crib steps, which are anchored into the granite slab via rebar and hand-drilled holes.

The result is a new structure that offers a safe crossing over 100 feet of the steep rock slope.



Trail Repair & Trail Bridge Reconstruction – *Recovery Act Projects- continued*

TRAIL BRIDGES



Seventeen trail bridges are being reconstructed and repaired across the San Juan National Forest, thanks to Recovery Act funding. Some projects involved extensive work; others were more minor in scope. The Lake Creek Bridge, offering access to Emerald Lake, had to be repaired via primitive methods because it is in the Weminuche Wilderness. Supplies were brought in by pack animals, and construction accomplished with hand tools. The bridge's deck structure was replaced, its steel superstructure painted, and approach rails installed.



The Fall Creek Bridge, near the Vallecito Campground but outside the wilderness boundary, was broken in half last year by a fallen tree. The old structure had to be removed, and the bridge rebuilt with new steel trusses and braces, treated planks, rails, cross ties, etc. The approach to the bridge was improved with fill materials and riprap.

Several other bridges needed minor repairs, such as removing old rotten timbers and outfitting the structures with new running planks and posts. Drainage was improved and bridge abutments and approaches stabilized.

Contractors and partners who received Recovery Act funding to complete these projects include:

- Coal Bed Creek Construction of Dove Creek
- Dillion Fencing and Contracting of Naturita
- First Cut Development of Durango
- Grand Junction Pipe and Supply of Grand Junction
- Richard May Construction of Mammoth Lakes, California
- Southwest Conservation Corps of Durango

